

Getting chance at convention to go national

■ **Honor:** For his work with a national Democratic group, Maryland's Thomas V. Mike Miller will step into a bigger spotlight in Los Angeles.

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WHEN IT COMES to Democratic partisanship, few people in Maryland are as committed to the struggle as state Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller.

The longtime legislator from Prince George's County has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to help Democrats win or maintain seats in the state Senate. And he, like few other Maryland legislators, seems comfortable firing rhetorical firebombs at Republicans.

Now Miller will be given a chance to perform nationally.

The Democratic National Committee has asked him to address the party convention next week in Los Angeles. Miller will be one of the first speakers as the convention gets under way Monday, according to an aide.

Miller has long been a supporter of Democratic presidential nominee Al Gore, but DNC officials said Miller was being given the chance largely because of his leadership the last four years of the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee, which raises money to help state candidates.

"We love Mike," said Jenny Backus, a DNC spokeswoman. "He's the best."

Miller said he expects no more than five minutes to speak. "I'm going to mention Clinton, Md., Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Bill Clinton, not necessarily in that order," Miller said, referring to his hometown of Clinton. "I'd like to bring them to their feet."

At least two other Marylanders are to address the convention.

Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski will speak Monday night, with the other five female Democratic U.S. senators. Their round-robin address will focus on family-friendly policies backed by Democrats and conclude with an introduction of Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend is to speak Tuesday night. Aides said they did not know her topic.

So far, no official role exists for Townsend's boss, Gov. Parris N. Glendening, although he will no doubt take a couple of minutes to boast about Maryland when he delivers the state's vote during the presidential roll-call.